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Mr. Bush's War

by Murray N. Rothbard

August 1990. Things were looking grim for Mr. Bush and the Establishment. Now that Communism in Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe had surrendered, the Cold War was suddenly over. How could U.S. imperialism be justified, now that combatting the Red Menace was no longer available? Bush's enormous military budget was in some trouble: how justify those missiles, bases, and all the rest? What is more, paleo voices on the Right, notably headed by Pat Buchanan, wanted to know: now that the Cold War is over and Communism is defeated, why shouldn't America Come Home? [For my own contribution to this paleo-debate, see "Foreign Policy for the Post-Cold War World," *Chronicles*, May 1990, pp.16-20.] A good question; so what was the answer?

The Establishment tried to run many answers up the flagpole; the uncertain world (true but a bit vague); "international narco-terrorism" (fine for small-scale stuff but not really BIG); German re-unification (Hitler!—fine, but a bit old-hat); anti-Semitism in Russia (Pamyat! the Protocols! Great stuff but what exactly are we supposed to do about it?); Islamic fundamentalism (Irving Kristol's point; good, but a bit passe, and besides that scary old Ayatollah is dead!)

Finally, the Bush Administration got its fondest prayers answered: an authentic seeming menace popped up, as Saddam Hussein, maximum leader of Iraq, launched a lightning-fast, brilliantly executed attack on August 2 against neighboring Kuwait. Aha! Saddam is a despotic dictator who attacked a small nation (another Hitler!), in a quick strike (blitzkrieg, just like you know who!). That's it! Since Hitler kept attacking one country after another (to take back the territory taken from Germany at Versailles), it follows that Saddam will also keep attacking unless he is stopped!? Stopped, of course, by you know who—the divinely appointed International Policeman against Bad Guys all over the world: Uncle Sap! To save our beloved friend "Saudi Arabia," perhaps to kick the evil Saddam out of poor little Kuwait, the U.S. sends in a huge chunk of its army, air force, marines, and almost the entire navy to Arabia.

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Comment #1. Golitsin! Here's a beautiful chance to test the North-Abraham-Gray et. al thesis that the entire collapse of Communism was a brilliant trap to lure the West to lay down its arms, and then to receive the ul-

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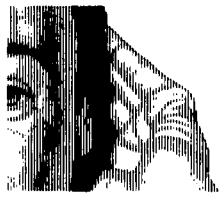

THE EAR

by Sarah Barton

Libertarian Summit! Oh my dears, it was The Conference of the season, the decade! August 13-15, at the Holiday Inn on busy, slightly tawdry Van Ness in beautiful San Francisco, it was The Summit: a coming together of (1) the annual Future of Freedom Conference, held for a dozen years in L.A., the first one a "fornicatorium" and it's been downhill ever since. Now taken over by Jim Peron, a biggie in the LP's Gay and Lesbian Caucus, whose libertarian "Free Forum" bookstore in San Francisco also highlighted his other big interest: the North American Man-Boy Love Association. (2) ISIL, combining the Society for Individual Liberty (you remember them, darling, they used to give those wild parties at every LP convention with non-alcoholic

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(THE EAR cont. from P.1)
punch) with the Libertarian International biennial meeting—their FIRST in the U.S. LI (and now ISIL) is an "entrepreneurial" (but that's without profits, darling) outfit run by two founders of the Canadian LP, two funky guys named Bruce Evoy (who loves to dress up in Paul Revere suits) and Vince Miller, whose offices have been for years cheek by jowl with former LP chair Jim Turney's in Richmond, Virginia. But now ISIL is moving from Richmond to San Francisco, taking over that oh so precious Free Forum bookstore right there in the heart of the gay Castro district. Jim has been promising for months to traipse off to South Africa (VERY courageous, darling), and we all wish him his just deserts.

(3) The annual meeting of the Advocates for Self-Government, Marshall Fritz's answer to Amway. Marshall is, once again, threatening to quit the Advocates (except this time I think he means it, darling), and go off on a new venture: franchising private schools. No, he's not going to actually run a private school; he'll be franchising the concept. No, it's not exactly a libertarian private school concept; it's a school where older kids teach younger kids, and they earn brownie points called "dollars." Like the old one-room schoolhouse? Yes, indeed. You can always depend on Marshall to be ahead of the curve. (And speaking of Marshall, to end the suspense from last month's Ear: the dear boy was sentenced to 60 days in prison and a $500 fine after his police-traffic contretemps.)

Well, you can just imagine! Every geek, crazy, loony, in the movement hitched his way to this great event.

But that's not all! There was also (4) the much revered National Committee of the LP, meeting at the same time, in the same hotel! Can mere mortals stand so much concentrated wondrousness?

Well, you can just imagine! Every geek, crazy, loony, in the movement hitched his way to this great event; organizers were calling up libertarians with apartments or houses or—more likely—cars up on blocks in the area, wheedling free "crash space" for these lovables.

High/low points of the Conference: John Baden, that big angry Mountain Man environmentalist, claimed that one old tree is more important than a hundred live people (applause from the Modals).

George Smith and Marshall Fritz debated the question: "Is the Bible Libertarian?" Ask a stupid question, you're bound to get a stupid answer. (Applause for the No answer from the Modals.)

Miltie Friedman gave the Keynote address at the banquet. Jim Peron introduced Miltie as one of the four Mt. Rushmore giants of 20th-century libertarianism, the other three being Mises, Hayek, and Rand. Friedman (standing ovation at the beginning) proceeded to trash Rand and especially Mises as "intolerant" and "lacking humility." It's an old routine of Miltie's (talk of the Pot calling the Kettle black!) but why did the assembled Modals give him a standing ovation after his trashing of a man whose boots he isn't fit to lick?

Come to think of it: the audience, Jim Peron and the rest, and Miltie make a wonderful fit. Yecchh!

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The Alaska LP, reeling from its failure to get on the ballot, has just had its computer and last few thousand dollars stolen by one of its own members.

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Former LP auditor Mike Holmes, CPA, has discovered through an independent analysis of the national LP's finances that party leaders are lying about paid membership. There are, *at most*, 5,500, with 4,000 a more likely figure.

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The Marrou for President campaign in the LP is heating up: Jim Lewis, beloved tax rebel, flew into Vegas and agreed to become Marrou's campaign manager.

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Speaking of Andre, he's now dumped his wife Eileen for a *much* younger woman. Andre, long without visible means of support, had lived with Eileen's parents. Who's paying now? •

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(BUSH'S WAR cont. from P.1)
timate hammer blow from the Soviet Union, (as "predicted" by a KGB defector some years ago, Colonel Golitsin.) Well, guys, here's the Window of Opportunity at long last. While virtually the entire armed forces of the U.S. are squaring off across the "line in the sand" at the evil Saddam, Soviet Russia... strikes! sending the missiles, parachuting guys across the Bering Straits into North Dakota, moving south. Red Dawn! John Milius, where are you now that we need you? [Note: this isn't my theory, folks.]

And so George Bush got his lovely war. Everyone, of all parties and ideologies left, right, and center, all the media, the entire parade of Washington Middle East "experts" who all seem to have just stepped out of a Mossad meeting, are unanimous in praise of Bush and okaying the alleged necessity to stop this "megalomaniac," this "Hitler." America must "stand tall" and all the rest [How about sitting for a change?]. Bush's approval rating, shaky because of S&L failures, zooms upward; no one in Congress so much as mentions the War Powers Act designed to curb this sort of shenanigans, and everyone but everyone is saluting the marching bands and the soldiers off to war. Bush gets his military budget hands down. And as we go marching, virtually only Pat Buchanan, Joe Sobran, and Robert Novak show any reluctance or appreciation of the complexities on which we are embarked.

The parade of D.C. Middle East "experts" seems to have just stepped out of a Mossad meeting.

Comment #2. All right, for a moment forget Vietnam: Remember Lebanon! Does anyone remember when Mr. Stand Tall himself, Ronald Reagan, got U.S. Marines into Lebanon, and how he/we turned tail and ran when the Marines were chopped up? Strange that no one, then or now, ever remarked on this fiasco, much less absorbed its lessons. Lesson of Lebanon: U.S., stay the hell out of the Middle East! (Another lesson: don't trust the Israeli state. A new book by ex-Mossad agent Victor Ostrovsky reveals that the Mossad had advance warning of the carbomb attack on the Marine barracks, but withheld it to further "poison U.S.-Arab relations.")

Why Fight for Arabia?

OK, let's examine the arguments for the U.S. march into Arabia and its war against Iraq.

"He's Another Hitler!" Oh come on, knock off the Hitler analogy already. What are you saying, for God's sake? That "if we don't stop him on the Euphrates, we'll have to fight him in the streets of New York?"

Wouldn't it be great, by the way, if everyone observed a moratorium on Hitler for at least a year? No more "another Hitler" everytime someone starts a war someplace, no more bellyaching about Hitler in general. There is more hysteria now, 45 years after his death, than when he was still alive. Isn't this the only case in history where the hysteria against the loser in a war continues, not only unabated but intensified, 45 years *after* the war is over? And consider too, the guy was only in power for 12 years! In a sense, Hitler will achieve his "1,000-year Reich" after all, because it looks as if we'll be hearing about him for another 900 years or so.

"Saddam's a megalomaniac, he's crazy." Yeah, crazy like a fox. He looks pretty shrewd to me: knocking off Kuwait quickly, and not trying to take on the U.S. frontally. "He's 'unpredictable.'" A code work for crazy. But look, Bush and all his apologists keep saying that Bush should always "keep his options open" so as to keep the Enemy guessing and off-base. But how come when Saddam does that it's "crazy" whereas when Bush does it it's the height of sound strategy? Double standard fellas?

"He's BAD." Very bad, no question about it. [As Dana Carvey, ace Bush imitator, would put it: "Saddam: B-A-A-A-A-D."] But Marshal Kim Il-Sung, Maximum Leader of the still-Stalinist regime of North Korea, is even WORSE. So? Why aren't we launching a big propaganda campaign against Marshal Kim, to be followed by sending army, navy, air force, and U.N. stooges (see below) on North Korea's border, itching for a fight?

And furthermore, the WORST guy, by far the worst guy of the post-World War II era, worse than Saddam, worse even

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than the Ayatollah (or is he kinda good now?), is the genocidal monster Pol Pot, Maximum leader of the Khmer Rouge, who, as head of the Democratic Republic (Communist) of Kampuchea (Cambodia) genocidally slaughtered something like one-third of the Cambodian population. (His own people! As the media have correctly charged Saddam doing in dropping poison gas during his war with Iran. Although it wasn't "his own," it was against the poor, hapless Kurds, who have yearned for their own country for a 1,000 years, and have experienced nothing but oppression from Iraq, Iran, and Turkey.)

Not only that: the punch line is that the Reagan-Bush administration has been allied with the monster Pol Pot in his guerrilla war against the Vietnamese Communist-puppet regime in Cambodia (Gorbyish Commies as against the ultra-Maoist Pol Pot), shipping Pol Pot weapons, so that he is just about to take over Cambodia once again! (Very recently, the Bush Administration has, in response, pulled back slightly from that commitment to Pol Pot.)

So if we're supposed to go to war against Bad Rulers, why are we allied with—or certainly not hostile to—the mass murderer Pol Pot? To say nothing of a host of other dictators, despots, etc. who have been dubbed "pro-West" by the U.S.?

But let us return to Saddam. Saddam is definitely BAD. But—and here's the point—he was just as bad a few short years ago when he was the heroic "defender of the free world" against the BAD fanatical mullah-run Shiite Iranians (Remember them?). Remember how, in the extremely bloody eight-year war between Iraq and Iran (which, by the way, Saddam launched, shortly after the Iranian Revolution, to grab a key waterway), the U.S. "tilted toward" (in plain English: sided with) Iraq? Well, the current Butcher of Baghdad was the same Butcher of Baghdad then. He was the same totalitarian despot; and he was also the aggressor. So how come the lightning-fast change? And not only that: does anyone remember, not long ago, when two Iraqi fighter planes crippled an American warship in the Persian Gulf, and the U.S. immediately blamed it on Iran? After which we shot down an Irani civilian airliner, killing hundreds?

If we're supposed to go to war against Bad Rulers, why are we allied with Pol Pot?

But, you see, Iran was ruled by fanatical theocratic Shiite mullahs, and pro-Iranian Shiites constituted a subversive threat, at the beck and call of evil Iran, to...Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the other Gulf States! So whatever happened to those Bay Guys, and that threat? Answer: they're still there. But the U.S. government, and its kept sheep in the media, have decided to forget them, and so, presto changeo! They just disappear in the public press. A couple of years ago, the U.S. government gave the signal: Iran Bad, Iraq Pretty Good, and the media and the politicians all jumped into line. And now, bingo, with no conditions changed, the Administration gives the signal to reverse course: Iraq Bad, Iran Pretty Good, and everyone shifts. And we used to ridicule the Commies for changing their Line (on war and peace, Hitler, etc.) with lightning speed!

But, "he invaded a small country." Yes, indeed he did. But, are we ungracious for bringing up the undoubted fact that none other than George Bush, not long ago, invaded a very small country: Panama? And to the unanimous huzzahs of the same U.S. media and politicians now denouncing Saddam? But Noriega, so Bush and the media told us, was intolerable: he was untrustworthy and thuggish, he used and even sold drugs, and, moreover, he was pock-marked ("Pineapple-Face," as he was elegantly called by the U.S. media), and he was odiously short. (George Bush, we are told, has an intense aversion to uppity short guys.) Gee, in his dislike of short, pock-marked guys, it's Bush who sounds thuggish to me. Besides, Noriega's attributes as thug, drug-dealer, and even short and pock-marked, never kept him from being a pet of Bush's so long as he continued to take orders from the CIA; it was Noriega's infidelity to the CIA that got him into deep trouble.

And another invader of a small country not universally condemned in the U.S. media was Israel, invader of Lebanon, and invader and occupier for over two decades of the Arab lands of the

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West Bank and Gaza Strip. Why don't the U.S. and the U.N. band together to drive Israel out of these occupied areas? Double standards, anyone? "But Noriega was opposed to 'democracy.'" Ah, come on, don't give me that one. Of course, if the goal of the U.S. action was, as the Bush Administration claimed, to "restore democracy to Panama" (when did they ever have it?), then how come Bush angrily refused the pleas of Panamanians after the invasion to hold free elections? Why did we insist on foisting the Endara clique upon them for years?

By the way, the one refreshing aspect of the U.S. war against Iraq is that no one has yet had the gall to refer to Kuwait as a "gallant little democracy" or to Saudi Arabia in the same terms (see below).

"But Saddam's short-lived 'people's revolutionary' regime" in Kuwait was a puppet-government of Iraq's. Absolutely. But so was the Endara government in Panama, sworn in on a U.S. army base a few minutes after the U.S. invasion began. So?

Repeat query: Does anyone really think that we would ever have to fight Saddam in the streets of New York?

Don't Cry for Kuwait!

Before we get all weepy about gallant little Kuwait, about the obliteration of the Kuwaiti nation by an unprovoked bullying attack, etc., let's look at some history.

In the first place, there is no "Kuwaiti nation" in any proper sense. The Middle East is very much like Africa, where the existing "nations" are simply geographical expressions resulting from the arbitrary carving up of the continent by Western imperialism. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, et al. were simply carved out as mere geographical expressions by Great Britain after the British Empire conquered and sliced up the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Moreover, Britain shamelessly betrayed its promises that it made (through T.E. Lawrence) to give the Arabs independence after the war. Winston Churchill, the quintessential British imperialist, used to boast that he created "Jordan" one Sunday afternoon at the stroke of a pen.

Before we get all weepy about gallant little Kuwait...

Furthermore, before Great Britain finally granted independence to its Kuwait colony in 1961, it was so little respectful of the "historic borders" of this alleged nation that it carved away one-half of old Kuwait and granted about a half each to the states of Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

And what about historic Kuwait? During the pre-World War I days of the Ottoman Empire, Kuwait was simply a part of the Ottoman district whose capital was Basra, a city in southern Iraq. Iraq has had border struggles with Kuwait since 1961, and it once invaded and conquered Kuwait, which "ransomed" restoration of its independence by paying a huge amount of oil money to Iraq. More recently, the major Iraqi grievance is that Kuwait has been literally stealing Iraqi oil. The Rumaila oil field straddles the Iraq-Kuwait border, and Iraq charges that Kuwait has been drilling diagonally from its side of the border to tap reserves from Iraqi territory. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* admits that "U.S. officials say there is reason to think the Iraqi claim may be true." (Gerald Seib, "Iraq Has Shaky Claim to Kuwait," *WSJ*, August 13, p. A5).

Another reason not to cry for Kuwait: its rotten social system. Has anyone wondered why the neocons and the rest of the Establishment haven't referred to Kuwait as a "gallant little democracy?" Because it might be little, but it sure ain't no democracy. Little Kuwait (a bit smaller than New Jersey), has a population of 1.9 million; of this only one million are Kuwaitis. The rest are immigrants; including 400,000 Palestinians (who are all pro-Iraq and anti-Kuwait): and several hundred thousand once-dreaded Shiites. These immigrants are not citizens.

Of the three classes of Kuwaiti citizens, however, only the "first class" citizens are allowed to vote. Second and third-class citizens are late-comers who "only" emigrated to Kuwait during the 20th century. They don't count. The "first-class" citizens are limited to those Kuwaiti tribesmen who have been residents in Kuwait since the mid-eighteenth century, when these Arab tribes settled there. They constitute 12% of the

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Kuwaiti population (about 230,000). Of these, women—of course—can't vote, reducing the ruling elite to 6% of the total.

The 6% elite are allowed to vote for a National Assembly, the Kuwaiti rulers' feeble concession to representative government. The National Assembly, when allowed to meet, often calls for more powers to itself, and more democratic rule. Two weeks before the Iraqi invasion, in an important action not mentioned in the U.S. media, the Emir of Kuwait angrily dissolved the National Assembly. So much for that!

When you get right down to it, then, the ruling elite of Kuwait consists of one royal family, the al-Sabahs, who staff all the top government positions from the ruling Emir on down, and of course run its oil. The al-Sabah family consists of 1,000 males, a family of tribal chieftains. Kuwait, in short, is a ruling Emirocracy or Sabahklatura, who have all become multimillionaires because the land they unjustly rule happens to contain an enormous amount of oil. This is the "legitimate government" of Kuwait that George Bush has pledged himself to restore! The crucial questions: Why must any American die for the Sabahklatura of Kuwait? Why are American taxpayers being plundered to keep that crummy family in their ill-gotten gains? Why die for Kuwait?

Mr. Bush is deliberately, brutally, and barbarically trying to starve the Iraqi people.

It's War, Not...

Make no mistake, it's war. It's not a "police action." Note how the Bush Administration, scorning Saddam for calling the interned Americans "restrictees," is itself engaging in absurd euphemism. An embargo is bad enough; a blockade is, by any standards of international law, an act of war. That's why the Bush Administration insisted on calling the blockade an "interdiction." Rubbish.

Bush began his undeclared war as soon as Kuwait was attacked, rushing troops to Arabia, thereby giving no warning and no time for American citizens to leave Kuwait or Iraq before hostilities started. Therefore, Saddam Hussein's detention of the 2,500 American citizens (plus citizens of other countries engaged in the blockade) is not a "barbaric" or megalomaniacal "taking of the hostages." In international law, citizens of enemy states are interned for the duration. German citizens were interned by the U.S. for the duration of World War II. So the entire American "hostage" problem is a creature of the unseemly and precipitate rush to war of George Bush. And when the Iraq government warns that the American internees will be treated no better than Iraqi citizens as food shortages develop, they are perfectly correct. Any harm that comes to the American internees is on Mr. Bush's head. Is this how Bush goes about "protecting Americans" abroad?

And what kind of war George Bush is waging! The 18th and 19th century "laws of war," a product of Catholic teaching and libertarian international law, brilliantly separate "government" and "military" from "civilian." Treating war as a conflict between governments or states, the laws of war bade governments not to injure civilians but only to injure each other. As far as possible, then, warfare was to be confined to military or governmental targets; civilians were not to serve as targets of war. So what did Mr. Bush do, from the very beginning of the Iraq war; not only blockade all exports of oil, but also all imports of food, upon which the Iraqi people depend. In older international law blockades, ships were only to be searched and the cargo seized if it were "contraband," that is, if it were arms and ammunition. But food was of course never considered contraband, and was supposed to be allowed to pass.

In the Iraq War, however, Mr. Bush is specifically targeting the shipment of food: in a deliberate, brutal, and truly barbaric effort to inflict starvation on the mass of Iraqi peoples. If the blockade is effective, Mr. Bush will be a mass murderer of innocent civilians.

What Are Bush's War Aims?

And so George Bush has launched his war, but what precisely are his war aims? They are vague and unclear, made worse by the fact that, in refusing to negotiate with Iraq, the U.S. is escalating and maximizing the scope

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and the length of the war. How long is this going to go on?

Possible war aims:

a) The minimal. Defense of Saudi Arabia against Iraqi aggression. An ostensible reason. But the evidence of impending aggression against the Saudis was minimal. Iraq has had specific grievances and quarrels against Kuwait; it has had none with Saudi Arabia. Besides: we didn't have to rush in troops and planes; we could simply have announced that any attack on Saudi Arabia would be defended to the hilt by the U.S. Why didn't Bush do that?

Besides, why defend Saudi Arabia anyway? The "international Arab effort" is a joke, a transparent cover for Bush's aggression in the Middle East. As soon as Kuwait was invaded, the Bush Administration bludgeoned the Arab states and the rest of the U.N. Security Council into submission (see below), using maximum muscle to get them to provide a cover for a blatantly U.S. operation. Before the Arab nations were brought into line, the Bush Administration was openly referring to the Saudi and other Arab leaders as "wimps" not willing to "defend themselves." Why don't we let the Arabs slug this out? Furthermore, even after the embargo decision, the Security Council was completely unenthusiastic about Mr. Bush's rush to a naval blockade. The *New York Times* reported on August 14 that Bush's announcement of a blockade "left the United States largely isolated" at the Security Council.

Moreover, is defending Saudi Arabia yet another blow in behalf of "democracy?" Saudi Arabia makes the Kuwaiti emirate seem like a democratic haven. In Saudiland, there's not even a pretense of elections. The Arab people are ruled, absolutist fashion, by the 5,000-man royal tribal family of the Sauds—now oil millionaires. Neither is Saudi Arabia some sort of bastion of "the free world." Women are prohibited from driving a car, or from walking on the street unescorted by a male relative. Pork and alcohol are outlawed. Why must one American boy die for the absolute rule of the Saud family? Why must the American taxpayer pay untold billions to support and maintain this corrupt family?

Why must one American die for the absolute rule of the Saud family?

One scary point about even this minimal aim: the commitment is endless. If the U.S. feels it has to keep troops in Arabia to defend against possible (not actual) Iraqi aggression, then the commitment is endless: already, even before any shooting, the U.S. has virtually its entire army, air force, and marines in and around Arabia, and we're already calling up the Reserves. Endless commitment; permanent war for permanent peace; war footing; and enormous continuing military budgets, are our future.

b) The wider aim of kicking Saddam out of Kuwait and restoring the "legitimate" government of the Sabah emirate. How can this be accomplished? Only by a shooting land and air war launched by the U.S. against Iraqi troops. A bloody and unpredictable prospect. Also: even if Saddam is driven out by war, doesn't this mean a permanent garrison of U.S. troops in Kuwait to keep Iraq out forever? And all the criticisms of the narrower (a) aim apply *a fortiori* to the wider objectives. And in what sense is that rotten al-Sabah rule "legitimate?"

c) The maximum objective: to crush and topple the Saddam Hussein regime. This aim will involve the greatest costs of them all. Besides, the murder of Saddam, which is what is contemplated [remember the U.S. air strike that murdered Kaddafi's baby?] will not eliminate the problem. Saddam is not just one man; he is the head of a military-Baath party (secular-socialist) regime, which will continue even if Saddam is murdered. And, what's more, Saddam will be left as a permanent martyr for the Arab world and a standing object of hatred for brutal U.S. imperialism.

And if Bush proposes to destroy not only Saddam, but also the entire military-Baathist regime, then after such monstrous mass murder, does he expect the U.S. to keep occupying Iraq forever?

Bush's repeated references to "Hitler" and "Munich" are a strong signal that the U.S. will not negotiate with Iraq, and is tantamount to a call for Iraq's unconditional surrender. This was the U.S. decision in World War II, which insured that the Germans would

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fight to the last man. Unconditional surrender maximizes the war and mass murder. In short, no one in war surrenders unconditionally, so proclaiming such an aim means that peace cannot be achieved on any terms short of eradication of the enemy.

Furthermore, we should not forget the reason that Saddam Hussein fought on for eight years after his original aggression against Iran had been foiled, and both countries were left battling in a bloody stalemate: because the Ayatollah Khomeini insisted that a non-negotiable war aim was the removal of Saddam from power. Iran finally had to give up on that insistence on unconditional surrender: why don't we? Are we as fanatical as the Ayatollah?

Let us also stop and consider the grisly and unsatisfying record of U.S. war and quasi-war in the Middle East since World War II: the fiasco in Lebanon, the air strike killing Khaddafi's baby, the shooting down of the Iranian civilian airliner in the Gulf. As Robert Fisk recently pointed out in the London *Independent*: "Not once has a foreign military adventure in the Middle East achieved its end." U.S. out of Arabia!

The Revival of the U.N. and "Collective Security"

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of Mr. Bush's war against Iraq is the sudden resurrection of the United Nations as originally conceived. The U.N. was dedicated to the old, disastrous, and failed League of Nations concept of "collective security against aggression." Given existing national boundaries, any "aggression" of one state against another must trigger the nation-states of the world to band together to combat and "punish" the designated aggressor. [See my "The Nationalities Question," RRR, No.4]. The effect of this misguided policy is to enshrine every dubious state boundary as moral and just, and to maximize every pip-squeak boundary dispute into a world crisis. It is also a mechanism for freezing the unjust status quo in place forever. For at any time, any zero point, when the policy begins, countries which had previously used force to expand their boundaries find their ill-gotten gains locked in permanently. The "have-not" nations [in terms of land area] are permanently crippled for the benefit of the have nations.

The U.S. has a grisly and unsatisfying record of war and quasi-war in the Middle East.

The United Nations was founded to put more teeth into the abject failure of the League of Nations attempt to enforce collective security. The Security Council was supposed to designate and move against "aggressors." The U.N. reflected Franklin D. Roosevelt's disastrous idea of a condominium of large, allied nations permanently running the world, in particular a condominium of the U.S., Britain, China, and the Soviet Union. [The Soviet Union had been committed to collective security ever since the pronouncements of Maxim Litvinov during the Popular Front period of the 1930s.] The one good thing about the Cold War is that it split the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and ended any policy of a superpower condominium in service of collective security, since each superpower has a veto in the Security Council. Fortunately, the exercise of the veto power by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. had reduced the U.N. to an ineffectual "debating society." [Contrary to U.S. propaganda, the U.S. has often used the veto power, especially to veto resolutions against Israeli aggression.] In short, the one good thing about the Cold War is that it kept the U.S. out of war.

But now, Gorby, in addition to liquidating socialism as fast as possible, has unfortunately totally sold out to U.S. imperialism, going along abjectly with Mr. Bush's bludgeoning of the "international community" into war against Iraq. Maybe, soon and hopefully, this will all end as the U.S.S.R. dissolves into many constituent sovereign republics, each of which will be busy with its own concerns. And since many of these republics seem to be devoted to private property, free markets, and national self-determination, perhaps they will also proceed onward to the libertarian foreign policy of isolationism and non-intervention.

But we can't wait for such

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events. The time has come to reevaluate the entire concept of the United Nations, and to revive that grand old slogan: "Get the U.S. Out of the U.N. and the U.N. Out of the U.S.!"

What Kind of an "Oil War?"

Bush has had the gall to proclaim in his Pentagon speech of August 15 that "our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom" are at stake in the war against Iraq. Freedom? Way of life? How? Then comes the reference to oil and its importance to the U.S. And so: under cover of the "war against a new Hitler" and "against aggression," comes the frank proclamation of an oil war. In one sense, this is refreshing, for it is seldom that U.S. imperialism acknowledges an overriding economic motive to its aggression.

An Oil War, yes, but Mr. Bush lies about this too.

But what sort of oil war are we embarked on? The standard media account is that unless we fight for Kuwait or Arabia, the evil Saddam Hussein will "control" the world's oil, will be "king of the world's oil," as one TV reporter put it.

Most commentators have, understandably, focused on the trials of the American oil consumer, on how there is danger of Saddam, once taking over oil reserves and wells, jacking up the price of crude oil stratospherically, thus injuring the U.S. consumer and economy.

But let's look at the question rationally. Iraq is a member of OPEC, and has been recently attacking Kuwait for producing more crude oil than its OPEC-assigned quota. OPEC is a cartel of oil-producing governments, and the only way the OPEC can raise the price of oil, as economics tells us, is to cut crude oil production. And to agree upon production cuts (which no one likes to do), there must be maximum production quotas for each country.

Cartels, however, do not have unlimited power. Their revenue depends on the demand schedules of purchasers. OPEC could not raise oil prices stratospherically, because its revenues would fall as buyers purchase far less oil.

The peculiar aspect to the current "crisis" is that OPEC had far more power to raise oil prices—and did so—in the 1970s. In the early 1970s, it was able to quadruple the price of oil (because of the Arab embargo of oil to the U.S. during the Israel-Arab Six Day War), and to double it again in 1979 (after the shutdown of Iranian oil because of the Khomeini Revolution). But OPEC has nothing like such power now. Since the oil shocks of the 1970s, more oil has been discovered, and produced, in non-OPEC countries (such as Mexico, the North Sea), and U.S. and other consumers are using less petroleum per product. The OPEC proportion of world oil output fell from 56% in 1973 to only 32% today. And since 1973, the amount of oil and gas needed to produce a dollar of GNP in the United States has been cut by 43%. All this can be predicted from economic theory: that higher prices call forth a greater supply, and that consumers and other buyers restrict their demands for oil and move to other sources or to more oil-efficient energy uses.

In fact, it is generally agreed that, even if Iraq could tighten OPEC production further, it could not raise oil prices by more than a few dollars a barrel. Is it worth waging an incalculably heavy and endless war to save consumers a few dollars a barrel on oil, or a few cents a gallon on gasoline?

Besides, if oil price raises are the problem, why didn't the U.S. move in force in 1973 against the OPEC countries, sending troops into Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to take them over and force them to lower the price of crude oil? Why should the U.S. balk at a few dollars a barrel now when it stood still for a quadrupling of the price of oil two decades ago?

Not only that: the U.S. government's concern for the consumer might be better gauged if we realized that the very same liberals and centrists now whooping it up for war against Iraq, have been agitating for a huge (say 50 cents a gallon) tax on gasoline, thereby shafting the U.S. consumer far more than Saddam could possibly do. Why is gouging the consumer unmercifully perfectly OK if it is government gouging by the U.S.? These same liberals and centrists are even now advocating a higher federal tax on gasoline.

Further: Our embargo and blockade on oil can only have the

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effect of raising the prices of oil and gasoline higher than Saddam could ever have done without this crisis manufactured by the United States.

And finally: If the Bush Administration and the mob of media and political liberals and centrists are so dad-blamed interested in lowering oil prices and in the American consumer, why aren't they calling for getting U.S. government restrictions off American oil supply: specifically, allowing expansion of production of Alaskan oil (and the hell with the caribou!), and allowing off-shore oil drilling off Santa Barbara and other areas (and the Hell with the pristine beaches and the sea view enjoyed, without paying for them, by upper-class Californians!).

The war against Iraq, then, has nothing to do with any "national interest" that Americans may have in an abundance of oil and in keeping its price low. Does that mean that this war is in no sense an "oil war?" No—it means that it's a very different—and far more sinister—kind of oil war: a war not for the American consumer but for the control of a supply and of the vast profits from oil. A war, in short, for narrow economic interests against the interests of the American consumer, the taxpayer, and of Americans who will die in the effort.

Specifically, why the U.S. hatred of the cartelist Saddam and its great tenderness and concern for the cartelist Saudis?

First, the long-term "friendship" with the "pro-West" despots of the Saud family. This "friendship" has been concretized into Aramco (the Arabian-American Oil Co.), the Rockefeller company that has total control of Saudi Arabian oil—and long-time heavy influence, if not control, over U.S. foreign policy. After World War II, Aramco (owned 70% by Rockefeller companies—Exxon, Mobil, and Socal, and 30% by Texaco) produced all of Saudi oil.

Originally, Aramco owed King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia $30 million in royalty payments for the monopoly concession. And so, James A. Moffet, former vice-president of Standard Oil of N.J. (now Exxon), who had been appointed as Federal Housing Administrator in World War II, used his influence to get the U.S. Treasury to pay Ibn Saud the $30 million. In addition the King got an obliging "loan" of another $25 million from the Rockefeller-dominated U.S. Export-Import Bank, at taxpayer expense, to construct a pleasure railroad from his capital to his summer palace. In addition, President Roosevelt made a secret appropriation out of his boodle of war funds, of $165 million to Aramco to do preparatory work for its pipeline across Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the U.S. Army was assigned to build an airfield and military base at Dhahran; the base, after costing U.S. taxpayers over $6 million, was turned over gratis to King Ibn Saud in 1949. Dhahran, not coincidentally, was close to the Aramco oilfields.

It's a happy partnership between government and business, the Sauds and the Rockefellers.

During the 1970s, Aramco was "nationalized" by Saudi Arabia, a process completed in 1980. But the nationalization was phony, because the same Aramco consortium immediately obtained a contract as a management corporation to run the old, nationalized Aramco. More than half of Saudi oil production goes to the old Aramco-Rockefeller consortium, which sells the oil at a profit to whomever they wish, in obedience to Saudi cartel regulations. The remaining part of Saudi oil is run and distributed by the Saudi government directly, through Petromin (the General Petroleum and Marketing Organization), the marketing arm of the Saudi Petroleum Ministry.

It all boils down to a happy case of the "partnership of industry and government"—happy, that is, for the Saud family and for the Rockefeller oil interests.

Iraq, on the other hand, has very little dealings with the Rockefeller Empire. In contrast to heavy dealings with Iran (in the Shah's day), Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf states, the big Wall Street banks reported that they had virtually no loans outstanding, or deposits owed, to

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Iraq. Thus, Citibank (Rockefeller) reported that its risk of loss to Iraq was "zero," and similar reports came from Chase Manhattan (Rockefeller) and the rest of Wall Street.

And so: the war against Iraq is a war over oil, all right, but not on behalf of cheap oil or abundant oil to the U.S. consumer. It is a war of the Rockefeller Empire against a brash interloper. Bush's Pentagon speech takes on heightened meaning when he talks about everyone suffering "if control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of that one man, Saddam Hussein."

When the Rockefeller interests and the Zionist lobby join up, watch out!

Let us consider George Bush, until stepping in as vice- president, a member of the ruling executive committee of David Rockefeller's powerful Trilateral Commission. Let us consider preppie George and his Texas oil friends, who will benefit, not simply from a rise in the oil price, but from controlling the supply and profits therefrom.

Must Americans fight and die, and American taxpayers be looted, so as to ensure further profits for the Rockefeller Empire? That is the choice that faces us all.

Let us heed the wise words of retired Admiral Gene LaRocque, head of the pro-peace Center for Defense Information, who attacked the Iraq war in tones of Old Right isolationism: "This is a war over the price of oil and I don't think we want to sacrifice the life of one American boy to keep the price of oil down or the king of Saudi Arabia on the throne." LaRocque added that "we couldn't drive Iraq out of there with air power. And using ground forces would be Vietnam all over again—only worse." [Juan J. Walte, "U.S. Beefs Up Forces in Region," *USA Today*, August 6, p. 5A].

We should also heed the words of Mrs. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, scarcely known for isolationist sentiments. Saddam, she writes, "is not directly dangerous to the United States or to our treaty allies." She goes on to charge that Bush is fighting the war in the spirit of the U.N. doctrine that also fueled our fighting of the Korean and Vietnam wars: collective security. "Those wars," she points out, "did not work out well." Mrs. Kirkpatrick concludes that only the Arabs themselves, not the U.S., can solve the Saddam problem. [Jeanne Kirkpatrick, *New York Post*, August 13.]

A final cause must be noted for Mr. Bush's war: the influence of the powerful Zionist lobby. Saddam Hussein poses no threat whatever to the American consumer, or to U.S. national interests; but he does pose a threat, not only to Rockefeller profits, but also to the State of Israel. Note how the Zionists in the media and in Congress are leading the pack calling for war, and how they call, with relish, for "destroying Saddam and his military capacity."

Two of the most powerful influences on American foreign policy are the Rockefeller interests and the Zionist lobby. When these two groups join, look out! How can the average American and American interests ever prevail?

Epilogue: W.C. Fields and the Food Fight

My favorite foreign-policy analyst, W.C. Fields, was asked during World War II to write an essay in a *Saturday Evening Post* series on "How To End the War." "Uncle Bill" Fields sat down, and quite seriously, proposed that the heads of all the warring countries be invited to the Hollywood Bowl, there to "fight it out with sackfuls of dung," the winner to be declared victor in the war. Naturally, the *Post* did not run the article.

I was reminded of this tale when, during the abortive Arab League summit of August 10, and after Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber denounced all Iraqis as "haramiyee" (thieves), Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz took the grilled chicken on his plate and hurled it at Sabah, hitting him full in the face. Sabah promptly collapsed to the floor. Well that's it, gang. Tariq won the food fight (by a country mile); Sabah is a wimp; so let's award the victory to Iraq and let's all go home!

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An Open Letter to Saddam Hussein

Dear Saddam,

I want peace, and I want the U.S. to stay out of war with Iraq, and I have thought of a foolproof plan for you and I to achieve this objective. Variants of this plan have been floated in the press (for example, *Newsweek*), but they have had one fatal flaw: they require George Bush to negotiate with you, and Bush, in the grip of war mania, refuses to negotiate. The "beauty part" of my plan is that you can achieve the goal of ending U.S. intervention *unilaterally*, without having to negotiate with anyone. This plan has several parts:

1) You have already announced that Kuwait has returned to its historic role as part of the Basra district of Iraq. Now you make another announcement: because of your magnanimity, and your solidarity with all Arab peoples, you have decided to give the Kuwaiti masses the right to decide their fate: to remain as District 19 of Iraq, to become an autonomous region of Iraq, or to be an independent state.

They will decide this at absolutely free elections, and you pledge to abide by their decision. To guarantee that these elections will be free and unhampered, you hereby extend an invitation to the United Nations to supervise the elections. Furthermore, you invite to head up that team the World's Foremost and Most Beloved Election Certifier, ex-President Jimmy Carter (thereby extending a sly poke in the gut to your former enemies the Iranians as well as to those megalomaniacal war hawks, the American neo-conservatives).

You will, of course, make clear to the Kuwaitis and to the world at large that these will be the first truly free elections Kuwait will have ever had. In all previous Kuwaiti elections, voting has been restricted to the "first-class citizens," to that privileged 12% of the male population whose ancestors arrived in Kuwait before the start of the 20th century. You will impose no such anti-democratic restrictions.

How will the U.N., or Jimmy Carter, be able to refuse? And how can the Bush administration, which loves to prate about "free elections," scoff at this action on your part, especially since the revered United Nations will be asked to run them?

2) Simultaneously with this announcement, you pull all of your troops out of Kuwait, leaving only, as befits District 19, administrators, police, and limited armed forces to fend off the Sabah-led guerrillas.

Even if he wanted to, Bush would not be able to start bombing or invading Kuwait or Iraq in the teeth of your pullback. It would be political suicide.

3) At some point in these proceedings, you apply to the United Nations Security Council for removal of the U.N. embargo and all attendant sanctions. You will, after all, have complied with the U.N. resolutions: you will have pulled out of Kuwait, and you will have given the Kuwaitis, for the first time in history, the right to decide their fate.

Thus, acting unilaterally and without begging Bush or Gorbachev to negotiate, you will have presented them and the rest of the world with a *fait accompli*. You know the Kuwaiti masses better than I do, but my hunch is that you will achieve a majority in the elections. But even if not, you will certainly have gained a strong showing. And in any case, you will have left Bush, Gorbachev, and the war hawks with egg on their faces. And sand in their egg.

That's OK, Saddam. No thanks are necessary.

Allah al-Akbar,

Murray N. Rothbard

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A Paleo-Libertarian Dissent on Iraq

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell

When Saudi Arabia raised the oil price 500% in the 1970s, no one talked of fighting. But now we're supposed to go to war against Iraq "to protect our standard of living." Aside from the morality of asking 18-year-olds to die for five cents a gallon, it's the U.S. government that's raised the price with its blockade.

But if Iraq controlled Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, we're told, it could strangle us. That's nonsense. Together, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia have less than 15% of the world's oil. But even if Saddam Hussein controlled *all* the Middle Eastern oil (way less than half of the world's supply), what do we think he'd do with it? Play Scrooge al-Duck and hoard it in swimming pools? In fact, he'd want to sell it, something we're preventing him from doing now.

Under Nixon and Carter, federal energy controls brought us gasoline lines and other dislocations. That memory is used to justify war. And it does—against the Department of Energy. Instead, we have hysteria over oil company "price gouging."

The oil price went up after the Iraqi invasion, and especially after the U.S. blockade, because traders saw that oil was suddenly more valuable. It would be scarcer in the future, and in that case, ought to cost more. In a free market, prices always reflect anticipated rather than present economic conditions.

Higher prices also mean conservation, whereas artificially low prices mean overuse. So the market worked, and for working, was savaged by the U.S. Congress, the biggest collection of economic ignoramuses west of Moscow.

If Congressmen really believed in cheaper oil, they'd repeal the vast taxes on it. Instead they denounce price gouging, and plan tax gouging.

If Congress really believed in cheaper oil, they'd repeal the heavy taxes on it.

The Bush blockade involves more than oil, however. It seeks to starve non-combatants. But as St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and other theologians have shown, it's immoral to target innocent civilians, something we seem to understand only when Hussein does it.

The Bush policy is also unconstitutional; only Congress can legally make war. The Founding Fathers were heirs to the English parliamentary tradition, whose greatest achievement was preventing the king from making war on his own. Parliament had to approve.

The Founders also prescribed a Constitutional foreign policy, as laid out in George Washington's Farewell Address: friendly relations with all who want them, a strong defense against anyone who doesn't, and no political entanglements with any foreign government.

We should protect the lives, the liberty, and the property of the people of the United States, in the United States, period. No foreign aid, no foreign wars, no foreign meddling.

The Founders knew from their study of history that an imperial foreign policy meant an imperial domestic policy. The warfare state breeds the welfare state, and they feared both.

War, they knew, is the state's best friend, and certainly this one is the answer to a politician's prayer. Americans will now blame Hussein for the recession, while every dreadful bipartisan scheme—from higher taxes to more "arts" funding—will slip right through. Even the politicians' S&L catastrophe has been forgotten.

In 1980, when Iraq attacked Iran, there was no talk of Hussein as the new Hitler. Instead, the U.S. government embraced the "Arab Adolf," sending him food, weapons, and satellite intelligence, as well as warships to hamper his enemy. When the U.S.S. Vincennes shot down an Air Iran jetliner with 290 passengers onboard, it was on pro-Iraq duty.

The State Department blocked a U.N. denunciation of Iraq's chemical warfare. And when an Iraqi MIG sent an Ex-

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ocet missile into the U.S.S. Stark—and 37 body bags of American kids home to the U.S.—the Reagan-Bush administration denounced *Iran*. It's too bad, I guess, that the dictator of Iraq tossed out the dictator of Kuwait, but why should American kids die for a collection of royal rip-off artists? Noriega was illegitimate, we were told, because he wasn't elected, but the hereditary tyrant of Kuwait is praised as the "legitimate ruler." That's what they used to call George III. And speaking of hereditary dictatorships, why are American kids and taxpayers upholding the throne of Saudi Arabia?

Colin Powell was recently praised in the *New York Times* for being the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs since Vietnam not to "constantly warn us about body bags." I saw some Georgia soldiers headed for the Middle East the other day, and some of them didn't look as if they were shaving yet. We ought to worry about them, and about the American economy, already sick from the Congressional circus.

The U.S. can't make the world safe for democracy, let alone monarchy. Nor should we. We have spent enough of our money, and of our children. It's time to come home. •

The Attack on Private Clubs

by L.H.R.

The purpose of the private club, is—as pro golfer Tom Watson pointed out—to exclude. But in America 1990, that constitutes a hate crime, as the Shoal Creek Country Club of Birmingham, Alabama, found out.

Shoal Creek had no blacks among its 500 members, and when it was picked for a televised PGA golf tournament, the NAACP decided to make it a test case, and demand that the club admit black members. At first, the president of the club refused to have people thrust upon the club who were not admitted in the normal fashion—i.e., new members who were not friends or business associates of the present members. But when national tv advertisers like IBM decided to pull their ads, the club—under pressure also from the PGA—gave in, and in a gesture that typifies the civil rights movement, gave a free membership to a black insurance executive.

Private property is neither private nor property without the right to exclude.

Calvin Peete, a black golfer, had said the club was an insult to "all blacks in general." In the town where I grew up, the fanciest country club was all-Jewish. Was this an insult to "all Christians in general?" Such a view would be nonsense.

Black Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) said he would introduce legislation to outlaw racially exclusive country clubs. But he sees nothing wrong with the racially exclusive Congressional Black Caucus or the United Negro College Fund.

In searching for a new president, the College Fund said it looked for three things: 1) "broad experience in the black community"; 2) the ability to deal with high-level business and government figures; and 3) "dedication to his race." Imagine if some white organization advertised for a person dedicated to the white race.

In fact, of course, it is the United Negro College Fund's right to be all-black, and to hire a black executive with any criteria it chooses to set. One of our most important rights is freedom of association. This right has been increasingly undermined since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which conferred spurious rights on blacks, while taking away real rights from whites. Under the Constitution, under economic law, and under the moral law, there is no right to be hired, housed, served, or admitted against an owner's will. Private property is neither private nor property without the right to exclude. •

The Name Game

by L.H.R.

So few Congressmen have the names they deserve. (The Hon. Barney Frank [D-MA], for example, is anything but.) But there have been a few. Unfortunately, we lost the appropriately named Cong. Pat Swindall (R-GA) to a corruption sting, but now the Rev. Rep. Floyd Flake (D-NY) has been charged with pilfering money from his Bronx church. If Floyd flakes out, we need a replacement: a Congressman named Crooque or Creetin or

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Schmuck or Bumb. And not just a bunch who act that way. Just one, please. •

Lyndon Baines Bush

by L.H.R.

The Iraq war's Vietnamish aspect is not George Bush's only connection to an earlier chief executive. When I listened to Bush's state of the union speech last January, he promised not to talk about the "state of the government." But to him, that *is* the state of the union. For here was a Republican president, to the cheers of Republican Congressmen, promising a fatter welfare state.

The "government's challenge," said the president, is "a job for everyone who wants one" (and welfare for those who don't), government child care for working mothers (another slap at the traditional family), a "roof over the head" of every homeless person, public schools where no one fails (!), cheaper medical care through more federal spending, and *zero* drug use among young people. He didn't promise us a rose garden, or maybe I missed that part of the speech.

A Republican president, from a party that used to oppose federal aid to schools—let alone Jimmy Carter's Department of Education—crowed over "record-high" federal spending for "America's education goals."

In America, we are supposed to have many goals—individual, family, business, and community—none of them set by Washington. Nor do we elect a president to tell parents in North Dakota or Alabama how to educate their children. Yet this Republican president proposed federal tests for all school children "at the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades" as part of a national curriculum. What our children learn—and, more to the point, don't learn—will be decided in Washington, D.C.

The LBJ-GHWB ideological axis.

And to those like Sen. Moynihan (D-NY) who might cut the ever-increasing Social Security flat tax, or reform any part of that Ponzi scheme, the president said: don't "mess" with it, which seemed an appropriate verb for this New Deal disaster. The Republicans cheered that too.

The environment president said he would elevate the EPA into the Department of the Environment—but without "bureaucracy" or "red tape." He called for billions more to fight the non-existent "greenhouse-effect" and to plant one billion saplings, none of them Congressmen.

Bush called for higher spending on Jack Kemp's HUD; the vicious National Endowment for Arts; the Department of Transportation's "magnetic levitation" trains (which will levitate only our wallets); foreign aid; export subsidies for big business; and much, much more.

"The anchor in our world today is freedom," said George Bush, as he chopped at the anchor rope, since every dime taken to Washington diminishes our freedom.

Jefferson, Mason, and the other libertarian Founding Fathers believed in minimal government. But even Hamilton can't have en-

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visioned the Rev. George Herbert Walker Bush telling us: Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you jobs, homes, child care, education, and trees.

Nor should we worry about the cost, for "the money is there." In fact, the money is here, but to get it from here to there, the president added 3,667 new tax agents. And that was before his lip-change operation.

As I heard the speech, I thought back to 25 years ago when another Texas president gave his first state of the union speech. He too was a "conservation president" and an "education president." He too was a long-term apparatchik who gloried in government. He too had "served" on Capitol Hill.

Lyndon Baines Johnson was a different sort of man, of course. He didn't inherit stolen wealth—he stole his own, and he stole elections. And he was even more of a liar. But in his 1965 state of the union speech, he told of a government that would "attack crippling and killing disease," "increase the beauty of America," cure pollution, "prevent crime and delinquency," give free medical care to older people, and provide "opportunity for all Americans."

LBJ promised a new Department of Transportation to build "high-speed rail transportation," a doubling of "the war on poverty," federal aid to education, subsidies "to support the flow of trade," aid for "the achievements of art," more Social Security, and a new department called HUD "to build cities where people would significance." He would give us, he said, a government that would "enable our people to live the good life."

The Bush-Johnson analogy isn't exact, of course. After all, LBJ's requested budget 25 years ago was, in constant dollars, *less than half* of George Bush's requested budget, and the Johnson budget deficit was 3% of today's. But both presidents displayed a messianic streak.

It is not up to government to help man find "significance," nor to make him virtuous. That is the job of philosophy and religion. Nor can government give everyone a job, a roof, an education, and security in old age. That is the job of the market.

It is no coincidence that since LBJ's first state of the union, morality and liberty have wasted away, families have been subverted, a pathological underclass has destroyed our cities, and the government has mestastized. America today is, in almost every sense, a less great society.

Even for us Anti-Federalists, it's instructive to read the Constitution. Unlike today's D.C. documents, it's short, well-written, and easy to understand, and it describes a president very different from the imperial figure who presides over us today. Under the Constitution, the president's job is to protect the borders and enforce constitutional laws. That's it. He is not national goal setter, nor commander-in-chief over the American people. Nor is he allowed to launch foreign wars by fiat, in the manner of a Roman emperor or an Arab dictator.

LBJ lied—with his phony Gulf of Tonkin incident—to get us into war; George Bush has done the same. I only hope that the parallels don't extend to another 60,000 American kids being flown into the mortuary base in Delaware. ●

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